

AFRICAN UNION

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DRAFT REPORT

ICT FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT WORKSHOP

6-7 December 2007

**AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION HEADQUARTERS
ADDIS ABABA
ETHIOPIA**

A. INTRODUCTION

The ICT for Youth Empowerment Workshop was held from 6-7 December 2007 at the African Union Commission Headquarters

B. WELCOME & OPENING OF THE MEETING,

i) Opening of the Meeting

On behalf of the Human Resources, Science and Technology Department of the African Union Commission, Dr Abdul-Hakim Elwaaer, Director of Human Resources, Science and Technology welcomed the participants to the ICT for Youth Empowerment Workshop. Dr Elwaaer noted the importance of realizing the expected outcomes of the workshop and further observed how the importance of ICTs in Education was recently highlighted during a UNESCO and FAO meeting in Rome.

Dr. Elwaaer informed the participants on the African Regional Action Plan on a Knowledge Economy (ARAPKE) which is a promising pan-African initiative that will establish a platform for launching more regional and sub-regional ICT projects for the benefit of the African Youth. He also informed the participants that the African Youth Day was launched on the 1st of November 2007 and special attention will be given to the youth to develop their ICT capabilities since the youth represent the most valuable asset and hope for the future.

He further added that while addressing Youth and ICT, emphasis on critical issues such as access, integration, empowerment, learning and employment is required.

Dr. Elwaaer concluded his remarks by thanking the participants for their participation and wished them fruitful discussions on how the African Youth can be empowered to contribute actively to the knowledge economy.

C) ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS

i) SESSION -1: ICT and Capacity Building of the Youth

Moderator:

Mr. Thierry H. Amoussougbo, UNECA

Panellists:

Prof. Tijani Ben Jemaa, Vice Chairman of CIC, World Federation of Engineering Organizations, representing ACSIS Tunisia

Mr. Wondwossen Tadesse Beshah, E-Payment Researcher, Ethiopia

Mr. Ugochukwu Nwosu, Program Manager Ajegunle.Org, Nigeria

Rapporteur:

Mr. Moses Bayingana, ICT Expert, HRST, AU Commission

The moderator commenced the session by introducing the panellists to participants before proceeding to set the stage by providing the following youth statistics of the UN Population Division.

- The world population in the range of 12-24 years of age is 1.5 Billion of which 1.3 Billion are in developing countries
- The African median age is 19 years
- The African youth population has multiplied 4 times since 1950 and is projected to be 8 times by 2050.

The session continued with panellists sharing their experiences on the theme before inviting the participants to contribute to the theme discussions.

Summary of Issues Highlighted on ICT and Capacity Building of the Youth

- ICT Capacity Building was highlighted during the World Summit on Information Society meetings.
- The youth are the natural candidates for training in skills for use and maintenance of infrastructure
- ICT Capacity Building of the youth should be extended to the grass root level
- Critical Mass of youths trained in ICTs needs to be attained
- Best Practice Projects on ICT and Capacity Building of the youth that have been implemented on the continent should be replicated across Africa
- Promotion of research and development by the youth on appropriate technologies for Africa
- Providing opportunity for youth in research and development is part of capacity building
- Mainstreaming of ICTs in the education sector and reforming of the education system to produce job creators and not job seekers
- Promotion of ICTs for both formal and informal education
- Awareness and High Level Commitment to take ICT as a priority and funds be allocated
- Need to move from pilots and scale up implementation
- Development of ICT Policies that address ICT and Capacity Building of the Youth

Session Recommendations

- ❖ The African Union in collaboration with its partners to lead an analysis on the Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats of the African Educational System and based on the outcome, advocate for an appropriate educational system reform
- ❖ The African Union to promote the development of harmonized policy guidelines on mainstreaming ICTs in the Education System
- ❖ The African Union to advocate and support the development of ICT Parks and Incubators for youth development
- ❖ The African Union in collaboration with its partners to promote best

- ❖ practice projects of ICT for Youth development
- ❖ The African Union in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), to promote the ICT4D media network in Africa and have ICT reporters at regional level

ii) **SESSION -2: ICT and Better Job Opportunities for the Youth**

Moderator:

Mr. Marc Lepage, IT4Dev, Kenya

Panellists:

Mr. Wire James, ICT Consultant, Uganda

Ms. Esperance Niyonzima, Burundi

Ms. Woulalem Taye, Ethiopia

Mr. Wondwossen Mitiku, DOT Ethiopia, Ethiopia

Rapporteur:

Dr. Zouli Bonkougou Telecom and ICT Expert, DIE, AU Commission

The moderator commenced the session by introducing the panellists to participants before proceeding to set the stage by making a presentation on the theme. The session continued with panellists sharing their experiences on the theme before inviting the participants to contribute to the theme discussions.

Summary of Issues Highlighted on ICT and Better Job Opportunities for the Youth

- Policy Issues such as mainstreaming of National ICT Policies into sector plans for implementation, waiving of taxes on ICT Products and providing of incentives to the ICT Industry
- Promotion of Research and Development in the ICT sector.
- Promotion of ICT Parks and Incubators to provide job opportunities for the youth
- Promotion of Business Process Outsourcing to provide better job opportunities for the youth
- Encourage Financing Agencies to provide access to funds to support young people's ideas and encourage ICT entrepreneurship.
- To ensure that the Private Sector including the expanding Telecom Market in Africa contributes to Research and Development

iii) **SESSION -3: ICT and Marginalized Group of the Youth**

Moderator:

Ms. Anne Kajuju Kibaara , Nairobites, Kenya

Panellists:

Mr. Gbenga Sesan, Executive Director, Paradigm Initiative, Nigeria

Ms. Mariam Nalunkuuma, Research Officer, UgaBYTES Initiative, Uganda

Mr. Thomas Tchetmi, Executive Director, Presse Jeune, Cameroon

Rapporteur:

Mr. Ugochukwu Nwosu, Program Manager, Ajegunle.org, Nigeria

The moderator commenced the session by introducing Mr. Darafify Ralaivao to make a special presentation on ICT and Empowerment of Marginalized Youth to set the stage. The moderator further introduced the panellists and the session continued with panellists sharing their experiences on the theme before inviting the participants to contribute to the theme discussions.

Summary of Issues Highlighted on ICT and Marginalized Group of the Youth

- The AU Vision for African Youth/African Youth Charter and Statistics on dialectic situation of Africa
- The definition of marginalized youth (Youth Charter Definition)
- The situation of marginalization in Africa
- A best practice example of an evidence based policy (tooth brush in Madagascar)
- Best Practice Projects in areas of Health, Governance, and women using ICTs. (As the case of Kenya, Nigeria, Cameroon and Uganda in area of youth).
- Health issues arising from long use of ICT equipments like; mobile phones, computers etc.
- Content regulation with special consideration of local culture and ethics for young people using the internet. An example of sending hate messages during election periods as well as pornography.
- Providing Mentorship and role models for Marginalized communities.
- Harnessing the use of Web 2.0 Opportunities; blogs, social networks etc.
- Exploiting additional activities that can be performed using mobile phones – citing Nigeria with 43.6 million subscribers as an instance.
- Review of the employment culture to address issues such as various employers asking for certain years of work experience as a condition for employment.
- Various challenges facing women participation like; Literacy and cultural barriers, Poverty, lack of interest and knowledge, language and Marriage responsibilities.
- Raise the issues of school dropouts and the need to develop special strategy to target those youth. (as the case of Cameroon)
- Existing regional initiatives such as ARAPKE, ADF-5, WSIS Action Plan and Ouagadougou Declaration also the African Information Society Initiative
- Cameroon Digital Initiative

Session Recommendations

- ❖ Promote the development of local content and use of local languages considering that the use of international language has marginalized youth
- ❖ Document and replicate ICT for youth empowerment best practices projects across Africa
- ❖ Review of policies that contribute to marginalization of the youth
- ❖ Young women should be mentored to be self productive and compete by using ICT as a tool.
- ❖ Need for relevant content and packaging for marginalized youth in particular the young women to access information and knowledge

General Recommendation:

- ❖ Harmonize the existing initiatives to be coordinated under the African Union leadership
- ❖ Support and align the utilization of renewable energies with the existing policies to serve as power for ICT infrastructure for rural areas
- ❖ The AU Commission to mobilize the member states and the Heads of state Summit to obtain the political commitment on ICT as a socio-economic development tool, similar to the HIV/AIDS programmes
- ❖ AU Commission in collaboration with UNECA to support the ICT4D youth network in Africa
- ❖ Promote the best practices on evidence based policies and success stories
- ❖ Take advantage of technological pool/incubator projects to boost youth employment opportunities;
- ❖ Encourage the private sector to get involved in human resource development and in research;
- ❖ Build youth capacities, especially in entrepreneurship;
- ❖ The youth has brilliant ideas. They should be given various incentives to create small-scale enterprises: tax exemption, special ICT investment funds, micro-credit, subsidies, tax reduction on equipment and software, etc.

iv) Closing Remarks:

Dr Abdul-Hakim Elwaaer, Director of Human Resources, Science and Technology made the closing remarks for the workshop by thanking the participants for their valuable contributions which enriched the outcome of the event.

The meeting adopted the Report of the workshop and participants expressed gratitude to the AU Commission and the HRST for their hospitality.